

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Park and Recreation Department
Conference Room, 11th Floor, City Hall
Monday, December 13, 2004
3:30 p.m.**

Present: Bob Aldrich, June Bailey, Colleen Craig, Glen Dey, Bobbie Harris, Janet Miller

Absent: Dennis Brunner

Also Present: Paul Gunzelman – Public Works Engineering; Mike North - Law Department; and Tim Martz, Doug Kupper*, David McGuire and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Bailey called the meeting to order at approximately 3:35 p.m. The minutes of the November 8, 2004, Regular Meeting were reviewed and approved.

PUBLIC AGENDA

No items.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **Discussion of the Revised Kingsbury Site Design.** Tim Martz, Superintendent of Park and Recreation, referred board members to a map of the Kingsbury site provided by Wilson Darnell Mann which identified two possible locations for construction of a sanitary sewer treatment plant in the future. He commented that the Water and Sewer Department had long-range plans for an additional sewer treatment plant in north central Wichita. In addition, he said that District Advisory Board (DAB) VI had voted 7-2 to approve the Kingsbury Park design as proposed, which includes the two alternative sewer treatment plant sites.

Bob Aldrich commented that he had attended the DAB meeting and said the DAB had voted to approve the site plan concept and also recommended that the larger lake area be developed first at the site. Superintendent Martz explained that the item was due to be presented to the City Council tomorrow. He added that he thought twelve to thirteen potential sites had been identified in the north central area for location of the proposed treatment plant. There was discussion of a site north of K-96 and south of the Kingsbury site that had been identified; however, Bob Aldrich explained that residents in the Moorings Addition had expressed concerns regarding prevailing winds and the possibility of odor problems.

President Bailey asked if there were any public comments or questions on the item. The following individual spoke:

- Rosemary Weber - GreenWay Alliance – asked if these were the only locations that had been considered in the area and why the plant was being located in a park again.

Staff indicated that they did not have that information. Janet Miller stated that she had several comments. She said the Board just voted on the Kingsbury design at the last meeting and that she

found it hard to believe that someone wasn't discussing siting of the sewer treatment plant at that time. She said she was incredulous about the process. She said the Board was being asked to rush to a decision at this meeting because the item was being presented to the City Council tomorrow. She said this did not allow adequate time for a public hearing. She also said she did not feel she had enough information on the item to make an informed decision and that it was going to appear to the public that the Park Board approved placement of the sewer treatment in the park. She asked why no one from Water and Sewer was present to discuss the item with the Board. She added that she was extremely unhappy with the process; that the Board did not get information in a timely manner, and that there was no time to gather public input.

Bob Aldrich said he believed the siting issue did not come up until after the residents at the Moorings complained about possible odor problems. Janet Miller stated that there were other people besides the residents of the Moorings who haven't been heard from. She asked if there were other possible sites in the area and where they were located.

President Bailey asked if the Board wanted to table the item until next month. Janet Miller said at this point, she couldn't make an informed decision. Bob Aldrich said he had couple of other issues related to the site. He said he would like to request that a reserve fund be established to help pay for construction costs associated with development of the site as a park area. Janet Miller commented that the original motion stated that 100% of the money from the sand mining operation would go to park development; however, legal counsel had determined that one City Council could not restrict future City Council actions. Bob Aldrich said he would like to see some sort of protection so that part of the money would be put into a reserve fund to alleviate taxpayer costs to develop the area. Janet Miller commented that there was no way the Board could do that. Mike North, City Attorney, explained that subsequent City Councils could eliminate the fund.

Bobbie Harris commented that the Board voted on the site plan last month. She asked why the Board was being asked to re-vote, unless it was to approve the new design with the possible sewer treatment plant. Janet Miller explained that siting the sewer treatment plant at Kingsbury might turn out to be the appropriate location; however, she said the Board did not have enough information to make that decision.

Bob Aldrich also mentioned the 20-acre parcel of "developable" land located in the northwest corner of the Kingsbury site. He asked if that was City or parkland. Mike North commented that the entire tract was City owned land. Janet Miller mentioned that she believed the 20-acre parcel had been set aside for commercial development.

On motion by Miller, second by Aldrich, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to defer the item until the Board receives more information on the site of the north central sewage treatment plant and the process and options for siting the facility. In addition, it was requested that more time be given for a public hearing on the issue and publication of an article in the newspaper so that people who are interested in the siting of this project can have the opportunity to express their opinions to the Park Board. It was further requested that representatives from Wilson Darnell Mann; David Warren, Director of Water and Sewer; and Larry Hoetmer, Park and Recreation Landscape Architect, give a presentation to the Board on the proposed project at the January meeting.

There was discussion concerning the motion. Glen Dey asked if application had been made for the plant site? Janet Miller said she had a broader issue with the process and the way items were presented to the Board and allowing citizen involvement. She said it was one more example of the overall process; that citizens often don't get information. She asked if there had been a site selection committee, who was on it, and who had the authority to make those kinds of decisions.

2. **Approval of Easement for storm drain at Pawnee Prairie Park.** Paul Gunzelman, Public Works Engineering, referred board members to an engineering drawing of the proposed easement and surrounding area. He explained that the City was widening Pawnee Street from Maize Road to 119th Street. He referred to the drainage ditch, which the City was proposing to replace with a 12-14 foot box culvert.

President Bailey asked about the purpose of the storm drain and the time frame of the project. Mr. Gunzelman responded that the project was due to begin in 2006 and added that the item had been presented to DAB IV. Janet Miller asked about the culvert design and how it will affect the park. Superintendent Martz explained that vegetation and volunteer trees (which sprung up after Pawnee Street was abandoned) would need to be removed in the area where the culvert will be located. Responding to a question, he explained that concrete would offer protection from erosion. He also mentioned that the entrance to the drainage pipe would need to be protected from children entering the pipe. He added that the City will be required to obtain the appropriate State and Army Corps of Engineer permits for the storm water project.

Janet Miller asked what else would be constructed at the site, in addition to the large drainage pipe, and would it interfere with the equestrian trail. Superintendent Martz explained that one of the footpaths would need to be replaced, but that it was not actually part of the nature trail system.

Bob Aldrich said he was more concerned whether water collected by the culvert would cause additional flooding along the Cowskin Creek downstream. Paul Gunzelman commented that the engineers have probably already studied that issue. Janet Miller asked what the Park Board was charged with deciding. Were they supposed to be looking at the engineering of the project and whether it made sense to construct the culvert, or just the easement? Superintendent Martz commented that the Board was being asked to grant the easement onto park property for construction of the storm water drain.

There was discussion concerning location of the proposed drain and the low water crossing at the park. Superintendent Martz clarified that a portion of the footpath would need to be removed and replaced and that the cost for site restoration was included in the project costs. Janet Miller asked if plans existed that showed what the completed project looked like. Mr. Gunzelman explained that the project concept has not been developed that far. He commented that the project consultant was Poe & Associates. There was discussion concerning public comment on the project. Superintendent Martz stated that there are currently a number of easements at Pawnee Prairie Park and more may be granted as the area west of the park continues to develop.

Glen Dey asked where the water that used to drain from Pawnee Street would go? He also asked how long a stretch of the road the proposed structure was estimated to handle and how much additional drainage would flow into the area. Paul Gunzelman commented that the culvert was expected to handle any additional run off from the widening of Pawnee Street. Superintendent Martz said the purpose of the project was to create an engineered structure to help stop erosion problems in the area.

Janet Miller suggested the Board approve the easement, contingent upon receiving a report on the floodwater drainage and exactly what problems the project is solving. Mike North explained that the Board couldn't grant an easement with contingencies; that the Board needed to approve going ahead with the project. He asked what would happen if the Board didn't like the report they received on the project after the easement had been granted.

On motion by Miller, second by Aldrich, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to recommend approval of the easement request as shown on the map (red triangle) so the next phase of the project could go forward, provided that all required state permits are obtained relative to flooding issues. It was further requested that a presentation on the project be given at a future Park Board meeting on the drainage impact, what the project will accomplish, and what the project will look like.

Janet Miller commented (for the record) that when the Board is asked for these types of things, that a presentation from Storm Water Management providing a little history and background on the project would be appropriate.

3. **Vandalism in Park Areas and Park Rules.** Superintendent Martz commented that there has been vandalism of staff vehicles and other items at Orchard Park. He said a committee has been formed to discuss the issues and ways to reduce the problem. He said the committee consisted of Orchard Park recreation staff, representatives from the Wichita Police Department, and the Principal at Hadley Middle School.

Bob Aldrich provided board members a hand out entitled "Orchard Recreation Center – After School Playground [Rules & Regulations]". He commented that he has communicated with Paul Zamaroni, the neighborhood Community Police Officer for the Orchard neighborhood. He also referred board members to the e-mails that have transpired between different City staff. He said he believed this type of situation was not unique to Orchard Park. He asked if the Department or each individual recreation center developed the "Rules" he handed out. He also asked who was in charge of the recreation centers. Superintendent Martz reported that Director Kupper and Superintendent of Park and Recreation Larry Foos supervised the recreation centers.

David McGuire explained that staff had a request from Community Policing to update and post the Rules & Regulations at Orchard Park Recreation Center. He said the plan of attack was to invite the kids who are hanging around outside the recreation center to a meeting to get their input and perhaps offer some programs that they might be interested in attending. He added that he did not feel that they would want to be a part of anything that was supervised.

Superintendent Martz mentioned one incident where a picnic table was set on fire. Mr. McGuire added that there is a group consisting of anywhere from 10-30 youth who move around the park and that they can be intimidating to other park patrons, recreational staff and recreation clients. Responding to a question, he commented that from his previous experience as center director at Orchard Park, it seems that as older kids leave the group, younger ones join; however, he admitted that the group has never really caused any damage before. Responding to another question, he explained that the rules are basically the same at each recreation center, with a few variations.

Bob Aldrich asked who reviewed the rules and oversaw enforcement. Mr. McGuire responded that the individual recreation center director and assistant directors are responsible for rule enforcement. He added that some recreation center managers may be a little more lax on enforcement issues than others; but added that the department tried to be consistent throughout the park system and that enforcing the rules uniformly was addressed in staff training. Janet Miller pointed out that the rules for the City's After School program did not address the unsupervised activities taking place outside the recreation center. Bob Aldrich mentioned that cars have been keyed and buildings have been spray-painted. He said someone needed to take control of the situation before someone gets hurt. Glen Dey asked about Community Police involvement. Mr. McGuire indicated that they have increased patrols in the area.

There was discussion concerning the definition of "loitering" and how it applied to park use. President Bailey recounted how the Orchard Breeze Neighborhood Association established a "Neighborhood Park Watch" program and recruited residents whose homes surrounded Kiwanis Park as well as other neighbors in the area to help keep an eye on the park and report questionable activities to the Police. It was the general consensus that this was an excellent idea. Bob Aldrich suggested that recreation staff get together with the Orchard Park Neighborhood Association (OPNA) to talk about establishing a park watch program. Mr. McGuire commented that one of the goals that was identified at the meeting with Community Police was that staff establishes a relationship with the OPNA and begin attending monthly meetings.

President Bailey commented that the Board was also concerned about staff and client safety at Orchard. She asked about the lights in and around the building. Mr. McGuire responded that exterior building and parking lights have been updated and that they are adequate. Bob Aldrich mentioned the lack of lighting around the playground equipment at the park. Superintendent Martz commented that new playground equipment was scheduled to be installed at the park closer to the recreation center. He said that the Staff Screening and Selection Committee had met to review playground bids and make recommendations for a vendor. He said that item should be presented to the City Council next month. Bob Aldrich said when the bid process is finalized; he would like to receive a copy of the proposed playground equipment for Orchard Park.

There was discussion on the action steps to be taken to resolve the situation and working together with the community and Police Department. President Bailey asked about school involvement. Mr. McGuire responded that the Principal from Hadley Middle School was also meeting with the committee. He added that staff would appreciate any help or suggestions the Board had to offer.

Bobbie Harris suggested that staff meet with the group of kids and ask them to come up with some rules. She said she didn't want to sound like a "Polly Anna" but said she would like staff to give the kids a chance. She said if the kids create the rules then they will buy into them. Mr. McGuire assured the Board that staff would be taking the opportunity to interact with the kids. Bobbie Harris also suggested that staff might want to ask the kids to define the problems. She said staff might be surprised at what the kids come up with. She commented that she thought the "After School Playground" Rules & Regulations as written were awful.

Mr. McGuire also reported that Mark Lowry, Orchard Park Center Director, had applied for and received a Community Policing Grant in the amount of \$1,000. He said items being considered for purchase were a 900 MHZ phone and mirrors to be installed in the hallways in the building so that staff and others can see what was happening around corners. Bob Aldrich suggested the possibility of

establishing a Community Policing office in the recreation center. Mr. McGuire said the idea had been discussed previously and recreation staff was more than willing to give up the space; however, the Police Department decided to establish an office at Hadley Middle School.

President Bailey asked if there were any public comments or questions on the item. The following individual spoke:

- Phil Blake – Operation Ensign – addressed the Board concerning vandalism, vagrancy, the destruction of public property, skateboarding, and the continuous theft of flags at Veteran’s Memorial Park, and in particular the John F. Stevens Memorial. He commented that it is a beautiful park; however, the activities he mentioned are a perpetual problem and it appears the Wichita Police Department does not have the manpower to properly monitor the area. He requested that internal halyards be installed on all flagpoles at the park, which he said would discourage theft of the flags. He also requested that flagpoles be replaced with stronger poles, so that they could not be bent over by the thieves. He asked the Park Department for their help.

*Director Kupper present.

Bob Aldrich asked if Mr. Blake had contacted the Community Police and neighborhood association in the area. Mr. Blake explained that there is no neighborhood association per se, due to the location of the park. He said Westar is located on one side of the park and a bank is located on the other side. Responding to a question from Janet Miller, Mr. Blake explained that with the exception of the John S. Stevens Memorial, care and maintenance of the other memorials within the park are the responsibility of the various veterans groups (for example, Korean Veterans, Vietnam Veterans, Submarine Veterans of World War II, Merchant Marines, etc.). He said the various groups are fragmented and aging and that care of the memorials will probably eventually become the responsibility of the City of Wichita in the future.

Janet Miller asked Mr. Blake what the Park Department could do to help solve the problems at the park. Mr. Blake asked for more Police patrols throughout the area. He mentioned that the City Police Ambassadors do patrol regularly during the day, but at night he said the park becomes a “no man’s land”. President Bailey asked if park lighting was adequate. Mr. Blake responded that only about one-half of the lights along the riverbank path work, but that the lights at most of memorials were well maintained by the different groups responsible for them.

There was brief discussion concerning which Police substation was responsible for patrolling the park and the size of the parking lot. Mr. Blake reported that there is one parking area with eighteen stalls and another smaller area with five stalls. Bob Aldrich suggested the possibility of placing a Wichita Police Department mobile trailer at the park temporarily to create more of a police presence at the park. Staff indicated that there really wasn’t room at the park. Responding to a question, Mr. Blake indicated that he has met with Chief Williams and Capt. Nelson to discuss the situation.

Superintendent Martz indicated that the City has over 100 parks with approximately 4,500 acres and that all areas experience some type of vandalism or graffiti at one time or another. There was also discussion concerning installing phony cameras at the park. Director Kupper indicated that would leave the City open to a lawsuit if someone gets hurt at the park. He added that Veteran’s Memorial Park was one of the parks in the downtown area that had more high-profile assets and

received more frequent patrols than most other park areas. He also indicated that lights would be replaced and upgraded under the "River Improvement Plan" due to be re-bid shortly.

Director Kupper also indicated that the City had received a \$315,000 grant for the Operation Ensign Project due to Mr. Blake and his organization's efforts. He said staff would like to move forward on the internal halyards at the park.

4. **Director's Update.** Superintendent Martz reported briefly on the following items:

- **Playground Installation.** Superintendent Martz reported that new playground equipment was due to be installed at Herman Hill and Orchard Parks. Responding to a question from Bob Aldrich, Superintendent Martz indicated that the location at Orchard Park had not been sited yet. He added that all playgrounds would have the new rubberized surface.
- **Request for Rodeo at Grove Park.** Referred to correspondence from Frontier 101 Productions. He reported that since Grove Park was not an appropriate site for the proposed rodeo, Park staff was working to help the organization locate another venue for the event.
- **Indoor Tennis Center.** Director Kupper reported that the City Council was due to take action on the indoor tennis center proposals tomorrow. [Subsequently, on 12/14/04 the Council voted to reject both proposals and that the \$2.5 million remain where it was pending the outcome of future discussions and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process]. Bob Aldrich asked about the status of the survey on the issue. Director Kupper commented that staff was proceeding with a business analysis of the need for more indoor tennis courts in Wichita.

Bob Aldrich asked how much money existed in the 2005 CIP for repair/replacement of tennis courts. Director Kupper explained that no money remained in the 2005 CIP for "Athletic Courts" because the funds had been transferred into the indoor tennis center project. Bob Aldrich asked about the possibility of releasing the \$2.5 million allocated for the project--or a portion of it. Director Kupper acknowledged that might be a possibility. Bob Aldrich also asked about 2006 CIP funds for Athletic Courts. Director Kupper commented that staff was currently working on the Ten Year CIP.

There was brief discussion concerning tennis court replacement priorities and the status of the courts and other items at Schweiter Park. Director Kupper stated that staff had been working with the Schweiter Park Neighborhood Association and that over \$485 million in improvements had been identified at the park.

5. **Discussion of Charter Ordinance #125.** President Bailey asked where staff was on the re-wording of the ordinance. Director Kupper reported that the City Attorney was researching verbiage and that the item was due to go back to the City Council in January. There was discussion regarding the City Council request to rewrite the ordinance. Responding to a question from Janet Miller, Mike North said he thought the Park Board would have less authority over parkland under the new ordinance. He said the rewording of the ordinance stemmed from the discussion on permanent designation of parkland.

Janet Miller suggested board members lobby their City Council members and explain what the Board was trying to accomplish. The Board asked staff if they could be provided a copy of the draft

ordinance for review before it goes to the City Council. Mike North indicated that he would talk to City Attorney Gary Rebenstorf concerning the issue.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:45 p.m.

June Bailey, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk
Recording Secretary